

ALASKA
COVID-19
VACCINE TASK FORCE

COVID-19 Vaccine Message Maps | Version 2 | November 20, 2020

Latest version: <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/id/SiteAssets/Pages/HumanCoV/COVID-19VaccineMessageMaps.pdf>

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Introduction

Good vaccine communication has never been more challenging – or more important. We are all “building the plane as we fly it” as we share fast-changing information and protect our communities from misinformation. To support Alaska’s health messengers, the Communications and Education Strategy branch of the Alaska COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force will issue this message map document on a weekly or as-needed basis.

How can I use this document?

All Alaskans have full permission to copy or edit these messages for their communications. No credit is needed. We hope this document helps you answer questions from the community, prepare leadership for press briefings, update website content, write press releases, develop social media posts, and meet other communications needs.

How will this document be updated?

We expect information in this document to change regularly as learn more information about the COVID vaccine. Our goal is to update existing messages and write news ones every week. The latest version of this document will be released at this link:

- <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/id/SiteAssets/Pages/HumanCoV/COVID-19VaccineMessageMaps.pdf>

The Alaska COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force last approved these messages for accuracy and style on the date listed at the bottom of this page, but <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/8-things.html> is another good site to check for general changes.

What is a message map?

A message map is a CDC risk communications tool designed to share uncertain or complicated information in the way that helps both messenger and audience. Message maps generally follow the communications “Rule of Three” and are presented in two layers:

- **3 key messages** – these are the 3 most important things that we want all Alaskans to know. These are **written in bold** and are also highlighted in the yellow box at the top of each page.
- **3-5 supporting details** – these are additional details that will help answer some Alaskans questions

Contacts

For feedback on accessibility or to request a translation of a message map, please email shannon.kuhn@alaska.gov with the subject line “message map.”

For feedback on content or to request a new message map, please email arnelson1@anthc.org with the subject line “message map.”

1. Is it safe?

No steps are skipped during the clinical trial process for COVID-19 vaccine. Vaccine safety checks are in-progress and will continue as long as a vaccine is available. Vaccine safety is complicated and important, and questions are expected and healthy.

No steps are skipped during the clinical trial process for COVID-19 vaccine.¹

- The FDA authorizes vaccines after they pass three phases of clinical trials.
- These clinical trials require thousands of people and months of data.
- The vaccine development is faster than normal because some steps are being done at the same time instead of one after another.

Vaccine safety checks are in-progress and will continue as long as a vaccine is available.²

- When a vaccine trial is paused or cancelled, it is normal and means the safety checks are working.³
- Vaccine recalls are rare. If a recall is issued, the FDA and CDC will let health officials and the media know immediately.⁴
- After the vaccine is authorized, FDA and CDC will continue to monitor it using three federal safety systems that are already in place.

Vaccine safety is complicated and important, and questions are expected and healthy.⁵

- More information on vaccine safety is available on the CDC, FDA, and DHSS websites.
- Doctors and scientists make safety decisions at the FDA and CDC. They may have training in vaccine science, medicine, and ethics.
- If you have safety questions about vaccines, ask your healthcare provider or visit cdc.gov/vaccines.

FDA – U.S. Food and Drug Administration – www.fda.gov

CDC – U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – www.cdc.gov

DHSS – Alaska Department of Health and Human Services dhss.alaska.gov

¹ <https://www.fda.gov/media/139638/download>

² <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/conversations/ensuring-safe-vaccines.html>

³ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/faq.html>

⁴ <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/concerns/recalls.html>

⁵ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations-process.html>

2. Is it effective?

A safe and effective COVID vaccine is an important tool for ending the global pandemic. Vaccines can protect individuals in different ways. Vaccines also protect the people around you - including Alaska's healthcare workers and their patients.

A safe and effective COVID vaccine is an important tool for ending the global pandemic.⁶

- Vaccines work to protect people by helping the body produce immunity.⁷
- A COVID vaccine must meet standards for effectiveness from the FDA. Data is still being reviewed.
- Vaccines have already helped us reduce vaccine preventable diseases in Alaska (such as measles, influenza, and diphtheria).⁸

Vaccines can protect individuals in different ways.⁷

- Getting a vaccine might protect you from getting sick.
- Getting a vaccine might help you not get as sick OR stay out of the hospital if you do get sick.
- Protection from vaccines can depend on your age and immune system.
- Protection from vaccines can last anywhere from a few months to your whole life.

Vaccines also protect the people around you - including Alaska's healthcare workers and their patients.

- Scientists are using clinical trials to test the COVID vaccine's effectiveness using large groups of people.
- Stopping a pandemic requires using all the tools available.
- There is not enough information available about the COVID vaccine to know if or when the CDC might change other COVID guidance. **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

FDA – U.S. Food and Drug Administration – www.fda.gov

CDC – U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – www.cdc.gov

ACIP (CDC) – Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices www.cdc.gov/vaccines/acip/

DHSS – Alaska Department of Health and Human Services dhss.alaska.gov

⁶ <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/global-research-on-novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov/accelerating-a-safe-and-effective-covid-19-vaccine>

⁷ <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/conversations/provider-resources/safetysheets.html>

⁸ <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/id/Pages/VPD.aspx>

3. What vaccine will be available?

Though we do not know which vaccine or vaccines will be authorized, Alaska is preparing to be ready for its first vaccine by the end of 2020. The FDA must authorize a vaccine before it can be used in the United States. After FDA authorization, the CDC recommends vaccines with help from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP).

Though we do not know which vaccine or vaccines will be authorized, Alaska is preparing to be ready for its first vaccine by the end of 2020.

- Scientists and doctors have been working on vaccines since the beginning of the COVID pandemic. Around the world, there are over two hundred currently in development.⁹
- As of November 20, 2020, two different vaccines are close to finishing the last stage of FDA clinical trials.
- Each vaccine candidate can have a different number of doses (1 or 2) or storage requirements.

The FDA must authorize a vaccine before it can be used in the United States.¹⁰

- The FDA clinical trials test safety and effectiveness in three phases using thousands of volunteers before it is authorized.
 - **Phase I** tests for safety in a small number of people.
 - **Phase II** tests hundreds of people with different characteristics (such as age and health status). This is to understand effectiveness and side effects.
 - **Phase III** tests thousands of people to assess safety and effectiveness.
- The FDA also sets rules for making the vaccine and reporting side effects.

After FDA authorization, the CDC recommends vaccines with help from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP).¹¹

- ACIP is a federal advisory group made up of medical and public health experts.
- ACIP recommendations are reviewed and approved by the CDC Director and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- The recommendations are official when the CDC publishes them in a report (MMWR).

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ACIP (CDC) – Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices www.cdc.gov/vaccines/acip/

⁹ <https://www.covid-19vaccinetracker.org/>

¹⁰ <https://www.fda.gov/files/vaccines,%20blood%20&%20biologics/published/Ensuring-the-Safety-of-Vaccines-in-the-United-States.pdf>

¹¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations-process.html>

4. When will a vaccine be available?

A small amount of a COVID-19 vaccine could be available in Alaska by mid-December 2020, pending FDA authorization. In the beginning, there will not be enough COVID vaccine for everyone. The goal is to have a safe and effective vaccine available to all Alaskans who want it.

A small amount of a COVID-19 vaccine could be available in Alaska by mid-December 2020, pending FDA authorization.

- Thousands of vaccines are already being made for vaccine clinical trials. Vaccine manufacturers are ready to make more as soon they get FDA authorization.¹²
- As more vaccines are available, federal planners will ship vaccine to all states, Tribes, and territories.
- The Alaska COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force and partners are planning for distribution across the state during the winter months.

In the beginning, there will not be enough COVID vaccine for everyone.¹²

- Federal planners decided to send small amounts of vaccine right away instead of waiting until they can send enough for everyone.
- More science and resources are going into the COVID vaccine than any other vaccine in history.
- Expect timeline estimates to change as more safety and effectiveness data from clinical trials is available.

The goal is to have a safe and effective vaccine available to all Alaskans who want it.¹³

- There are no plans for a state vaccine mandate.¹³
- The State of Alaska will share updates on vaccine availability within Alaska at covidvax.alaska.gov.¹³
- The [VaccineFinder](https://vaccinefinder.org/) website will be updated to help Alaskans find COVID vaccine in your community.¹⁴

FDA – U.S. Food and Drug Administration – www.fda.gov

¹² <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/faq.html>

¹³ covidvax.alaska.gov

¹⁴ <https://vaccinefinder.org/>

5. Who will get the vaccine first?

Many different groups of medical and public health experts are thinking about who should get early COVID vaccination. People at high risk of getting exposed to COVID or getting very sick from COVID may be vaccinated first. The Alaska COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force is working with federal, state, Tribal, military, and community partners to plan for Alaska's needs.

Many different groups of medical and public health experts are thinking about who should get early COVID vaccination.¹⁵

- Within the CDC, there is a group of doctors and others vaccine experts called ACIP, or the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices.
- The Alaska Immunization Program already follows ACIP schedules for childhood and adult vaccinations.¹⁶
- Alaskans can learn more about ACIP's goals, values, and decisions at this website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations-process.html>

People at high risk of getting exposed to COVID or getting very sick from COVID may be vaccinated first.¹⁵

- ACIP is currently considering four groups for early vaccination. These groups are 1) healthcare personnel 2) workers in essential and critical industries 3) people at high risk for severe COVID-19 illness due to underlying medical conditions 4) people 65 years and older.
- ACIP and other groups will provide more details as more data comes out from clinical trials.
- Expect some states, Tribes, or organizations to provide their own guidance.

The Alaska COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force is working with federal, state, Tribal, military, and community partners to plan for Alaska's needs.

- Distribution plans will change as we learn more.
- Plans are considering things like vaccine effectiveness, level of disease, number of doses needed, storage requirements, vaccine demand, and more.
- Keeping the public informed is an important part of the planning process. Alaskans can visit the covidvax.alaska.gov for the latest updates.¹⁷

CDC – U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – www.cdc.gov

ACIP (CDC) – Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices www.cdc.gov/vaccines/acip/

DHSS – Alaska Department of Health and Human Services dhss.alaska.gov

¹⁵ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations-process.html>

¹⁶ <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/iz/Pages/parents.aspx>

¹⁷ covidvax.alaska.gov

6. Will there be a vaccine mandate?

There are no plans for a State of Alaska COVID-19 vaccine mandate at this time. The Alaska COVID Vaccine Task Force is working to provide Alaskans with the information they need to make safe and healthy decisions about vaccination. State and Tribal leaders prioritize Alaskans' trust and safety.

There are no plans for a State of Alaska COVID-19 vaccine mandate at this time.

- States and employers have the legal authority to require vaccines.¹⁸
- In Alaska, vaccine mandates are most often used by employers to protect the health of workers, their patients, or their students.
- For example:
 - a state can mandate vaccines for school children
 - a hospital can mandate vaccinations for employees
 - the military (as an employer) can mandate vaccinations for soldiers and civilian staff

The Alaska COVID Vaccine Task Force is working to provide Alaskans with the information they need to make safe and healthy decisions about vaccination.

- Education and communications resources are available for free at covidvax.alaska.gov.
- The Alaska COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force considers the needs of different audiences as it develops new communications.
- If you have specific questions about whether a vaccine is right for you, you can ask your healthcare provider.

State and Tribal leaders prioritize Alaskans' trust and safety.

- When a FDA-authorized vaccine is available, some public leaders plan to share their stories of getting vaccinated to inspire others to choose vaccination too.
- Alaskans who get a COVID vaccine will be protecting themselves and those around them - including those who can't get the vaccine.
- If you see rumors being spread of a statewide COVID vaccine mandate in Alaska, protect others by sharing official information from covidvax.alaska.gov.

FDA – U.S. Food and Drug Administration – www.fda.gov

¹⁸ <https://hub.jhu.edu/2020/11/20/could-coronavirus-vaccines-become-mandatory/>

7. Who pays for the vaccine?

Resources are needed for the development, distribution, and administration of the COVID vaccine. The CDC has stated that cost will not be an obstacle for the American people to get vaccinated against COVID-19. The Alaska COVID Vaccine Task Force is working to ensure all Alaskans have access to the COVID vaccine at no charge.

Resources are needed for development, distribution, and administration of the COVID vaccine.

- Development costs include researching and manufacturing of the vaccine itself.
- Distribution costs include shipping the vaccine to states, Tribes, and territories.
- Administration costs include giving the vaccine to Alaskans at hospitals, clinics, pharmacies, or other locations.

The CDC has stated that cost will not be an obstacle for the American people to get vaccinated against COVID-19.¹⁹

- Since March of 2020, the U.S. government has funded several different companies to research, develop, and manufacture a vaccine.²⁰
- The U.S. government will work with McKesson Corporation to distribute a vaccine and related (ancillary) supplies. The CDC already uses McKesson to distribute childhood and flu vaccinations.²¹
- The CARES Act and other guidance from the U.S. government set more detailed rules for COVID vaccine costs.²²

The Alaska COVID Vaccine Task Force is working to ensure all Alaskans have access to the COVID vaccine at no charge.

- In general, health care providers are not allowed to bill a patient for the cost of administering the COVID-19 vaccine.
- Your provider may charge your health insurer an administration fee related to the vaccine dose. If you have questions, please reach out to your health insurer or benefits administrator.
- If you are uninsured and a fee is charged by your provider, the fee may be paid by HRSA (Health Resources and Service Administration).²³

CDC – U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – www.cdc.gov
CARES Act – Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act

¹⁹ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/8-things.html>

²⁰ <https://medicalcountermeasures.gov/app/barda/coronavirus/COVID19.aspx?filter=vaccine>

²¹ <https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2020/08/14/trump-administration-collaborates-mckesson-covid-19-vaccine-distribution.html>

²² <https://www.congress.gov/116/bills/hr748/BILLS-116hr748enr.pdf>

²³ <https://www.hrsa.gov/CovidUninsuredClaim>